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DRYDEN AND SHELLEY ON MILTON.

To the Editors of Mod. Lang. Notes.

SIRS:—In *Adonais*, the fourth stanza, Shelley says of Milton :

He went, unterrified,
Into the gulf of death ; but his clear Sprite
Yet reigns o'er earth ; the third among the sons of light.

Rossetti comments on the last clause as follows (*Adonais*, ed. W. M. Rossetti and A. O. Prickard, p. 103): 'At first sight this phrase might seem to mean "the third-greatest poet of the world" : in which case one might suppose Homer and Shakespeare to be ranked as the first and second. But it may be regarded as tolerably clear that Shelley is here thinking only of *epic* poets ; and that he ranges the epic poets according to a criterion of his own, which is thus expressed in his *Defence of Poetry* (written in the same year as *Adonais*, 1821): "Homer was the first and Dante the second epic poet ; that is, the second poet the series of whose creations bore a defined and intelligible relation to the knowledge and sentiment and religion of the age in which he lived, and of the ages which followed it—developing itself in correspondence with their development. . . . Milton was the third epic poet."'

It would not have been amiss to add the well-known lines of Dryden which 'appeared under the engraving prefixed to Tonson's folio edition of the *Paradise Lost*' (Dryden, *Works*, ed. Scott and Saintsbury, 11. 162) :

Three poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
The first, in loftiness of thought surpassed ;
The next, in majesty ; in both, the last.
The force of nature could no further go ;
To make a third, she joined the former two.

'Mr. Malone,' says Scott, 'regards Dryden's hexastich as an amplification of Selvaggi's distich, addressed to Milton while at Rome ;—

Græcia Mæonidem, jactet sibi Roma Maronem,
Anglia Miltonum jactat utrique parem.

It is not unreasonable to suppose that Shelley was familiar with the inscription by Dryden. If so, his tacit substitution of Dante for Virgil is all the more significant.

LANE COOPER.

Cornell University.

A NEW MANUSCRIPT OF CHAUCER'S *Monkes Tale.*

To the Editors of Mod. Lang. Notes.

SIRS:—Trinity College Cambridge ms. R. 3. 19 is a heterogeneous mass of fifteenth century poetry, chiefly famous as being the source of most

of Stow's additions to Chaucer, in his 1561 collection. The manuscript has been often described, and the latest description accessible to all is in Dr. James' Catalogue of the mss. of this library, vol. II. An additional note upon articles number 39 and 40 in his summary of contents there printed is however needed, since Dr. James did not identify these items, except under the ms. title 'Bochas.'

On folio 170b, a *prohenium* beginning

Worshipfull and dyserete that here present be
I wyll yow tell a tale, two or thre,

is to be identified as the monk's opening speech, in the Oxford Chaucer, B 3157–3180. The first line as here given is the work of the person who made these extracts ; the rest are all Chaucer's. The monk's speech is written as if composed in three stanzas of eight lines each, instead of in couplets. There follows the *Monkes Tale*, B 3181–3196 (De Lucifero). Then, because Chaucer had not done justice to Adam in his one poor stanza, the scribe substituted Lydgate's long account of Adam in the *Fall of Princes*, and certain envoys from the same source, in Bk. I, chaps. 1, 3, 4, 8 (in part). This brings us to folio 179a, where the scribe went back to the *Monkes Tale*, and completed it, from Sampson to Cresus, B 3205–3956. The order and contents are as given in the latest manuscripts, except that ll. 3565–3588 were omitted—on Pedro of Cyprus and Pedro of Spain—and l. 3611 was passed over by mistake, and the stanzas following that line confused thereby. Having completed the *Monkes Tale*, and added his *Explicit*, the scribe went on with extracts and envoys from the *Fall of Princes*, in the following order : Books I, chapters 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 18, 23 ; II, 2, 1, 6, 12, 13, 15, 21, 22, 25, 27, 30 ; III, 5, 9, 10, 14, 17, 20.

This performance is interesting, as exhibiting the taste which could select this tale of all others for reading, and then supplement Chaucer by Lydgate. The manuscript belongs not far from Edward IV's time, and the fall of princes was then an absorbing topic.

For textual purposes the ms. is of little value, though excellent for its time.

HENRY NOBLE MACCRACKEN.

Oxford, England.

A NOTE ON BROWNING.

To the Editors of Mod. Lang. Notes.

SIRS:—In *Caliban on Setebos* Browning uses a peculiar device which he affects nowhere else (except sporadically) in his poems, and which, so far as I have observed, no other writer uses.

It is the employment of the apostrophe at the beginning of a verb to indicate the omission, not of a letter, but of the subject. The omitted subject is in every case Caliban, or a pronoun in the first or third person referring to him. Of the 120 cases in which Caliban makes himself the subject of a verb, the subject is expressed in 78. In the remaining 42 the apostrophe is used 33 times to indicate the omission of the word Caliban or an equivalent in the third person, 6 times to indicate the omission of the first personal pronoun. In three cases a past tense makes it doubtful whether the subject is in the first person or in the third.

What I would especially call attention to, however, is not the device itself, peculiarly Browningsque though it is, but the fact that it is not employed consistently, either as regards its occurrence in the poem, or as regards the different editions of the poem. The first kind of inconsistency can be made apparent by a few examples. I quote from the edition of 1864 :

- 1) 'Say, the first straggler that boasts purple spots
Shall join the file, one pincer twisted off;
'Say, this bruised fellow shall receive a worm.
- 2) Vexed, 'stitched a book of broad leaves, arrow-shaped,
Wrote thereon, he knows what, prodigious words;
Has peeled a wand and called it by a name;
Weareth at whiles for an enchanter's robe
- 3) 'Falls to make something : 'piled yon pile of turfs
- 4) Is, not to seem too happy. Sees, himself,
Yonder two flies, with purple films and pink,
Bask on the pompion-bell above : kills both.
'Sees two black painful beetles roll their ball
On head and tail as if to save their lives :
Moves them the stick away they strive to clear.

In the first example the verb following the semicolon has the apostrophe; in the second the verbs "Has" and "Weareth," also following semicolons, have no apostrophe. In the third, the verb "piled," following a colon, has the apostrophe; in the fourth the verbs "kills" and "Moves," after the same mark of punctuation, have none. Notice also that the verb "Sees" in the first line of the fourth example is un-apostrophed. The number of such inconsistencies is five.

The variations in the different editions may be shown as follows :

1864	'Would teach the reasoning couple what "must" means	
1865	'Would	
1868	'Would	
1887	'Would	
1889	Would	
1864	Is, not to seem too happy.	Sees, himself
1865		'Sees
1868		'Sees
1887		'Sees
1889		'Sees

1864 Moves them the stick away they strive to clear

1865 Moves

1868 Moves

1887 'Moves

1889 Moves

If there is in the poem itself any reason for these seeming inconsistencies or for the changes in the different editions, I have not been able to discover it. Perhaps some one, who has given more attention to Browning's idiosyncracies than I have, may be moved to offer an explanation.

I know but three other examples of this use of the apostrophe by Browning : one in *Fra Lippo Lippi*, and two in *The Inn Album*.

FRED NEWTON SCOTT.

University of Michigan.

SOME WORDS USED IN *King Leir*.

To the Editors of Mod. Lang. Notes.

SIRS :—Notice of a forthcoming edition, in England, of the pre-Shaksperian play of *King Leir*, may lend interest to the following notes concerning words used in that play in somewhat unfamiliar senses. The latest section of the *New English Dictionary*, issued January 1, 1908, cites one line from the *Leir*, under date of 1593, to illustrate the use of the verb *postulate*, meaning 'beg or demand.' This is the sole reference to the play that I have seen in Dr. Murray's work.

1. *Congratulate* = 'requite, recompense.'

"*Leir*. But how shall we *congratulate* their kindnesse?
Perillus. Infaith I know not how sufficiently;
But the best meane that I can think on is this :
Ile offer them my dublet in requital."

Under the word *gratulate*, *N. E. D.* cites two references dated 1611 and 1612 respectively, to establish the definition, 'reward or recompense.' I have found no second instance of *congratulate* used in this sense.

2. *Indurable* = 'unendurable, unbearable.'

"ill befitting for your reverend age,
To come on foot a journey so *indurable*."

N. E. D. contains this definition, but the only citation is from Topsell, *Four-footed Beasts*, 1607. As already stated, the *Leir* is about fifteen years earlier.

3. *Disconsolate* = 'make disconsolate.'

"Ah, do not so *disconsolate* yourselfe."

N. E. D. quotes the exact words to establish this definition, but attributes them to Yarrington's *Two Lamentable Tragedies*, published in 1601,